

Draft Minutes
Mid Atlantic Regional Partnership Committee Meeting
Boiling Springs, PA
Oct. 15, 2005

Attendance:

RPC representatives (representative first, alternate second): Kerry Snow, John Hedrick, PATC; Frank Bohn, Dallas Owens, CVATC; Paul Ives, Tede Fleming, MCM; Jim Hooper, YHC; John Lenahan, Barb Harvey, SATC; Hal Wright, Barb Wiemann, AHC; Scott Birchman, Martyann Gutierrez, BMECC; Dave Scheid, PTC; Dan Schwartz, Bill Steinmetz, AMC-DV; Al Britton, Batona; Mike Kintner, Bill Tinney, WTC; Ron Rosen, Walt Daniel, NYNJ

ATC: Bob Proudman, Karen Lutz, Bob Sickley, Michele Miller

NPS: Rita Hennessey, David Reus

Visitor: Henry Chisholm, WTC

Opening and introductions -- Chair Snow convened the meeting at 9:35 AM and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

Stewardship Council -- Snow, the MARPC delegate to the Council, reported that the first Council meeting was held Sept. 23 and 24. The Council is responsible for ATC's most traditional duties related to the trail. The four RPCs have the same responsibilities as the Council. Each RPC needs to develop a regional approach.

AT Shelters -- Lutz stated that the Committee needs to develop a philosophical approach to issues and concerns. This is the essence of the committee's role in AT management in the Mid Atlantic region. It is the job of the maintaining clubs and individual maintainers to give hikers not what they want, but what they need. It is our job is to protect and enhance the resource that is the Appalachian Trail, since club decisions affect users and the trail.

Lutz then showed slides of AT shelters. The group discussed the attributes of each one (roofs, footers, construction materials, design, size, location, etc.) and its amenities (tables, swings, flowers, fire rings, etc.), suggesting which features might fit into a primitive experience and changes that could be made to reinforce a primitive trail experience.

Points raised included:

Should the trail be "zoned", designating areas for front country and back country experiences?

All human construction entails liability

"If you build it, they will come" – concentration vs. dispersal of overnight users

It is harder to provide a primitive experience than amenities

It is hard to remove amenities once offered

Involving clubs in choosing designs and making facilities decisions is vital

We need standards for future shelters

Lutz asked everyone to consider what experience we are charged with providing to hikers and how we can approach this conversation with the maintaining clubs and maintainers.

Backcountry sanitation – Discussion turned to privies, which are often constructed at shelters.

Regulations for types of privies and locations may be dictated by each state. For example, pit privies are not legal in many places. Other options include pumpable vaults, clivus multrum with one bin or double bin, batch bins, and moldering privies. Points raised included:

Should we provide privies?

What is the future of privies?

If we concentrate people, we need to provide sanitation

Copies of *Wilderness Ethics* by Laura and Guy Waterman were distributed to each representative as a resource for philosophical discussions.

Trail Assessment -- Reus gave a power point presentation about the recently revamped trail assessment format. The condition assessment covers:

1. an inventory of trail assets

2. determination of the condition of trail assets
3. managing assessment information

An asset is anything built, including the trail surface, bridges, parking lots, and boundaries. The information is collected with a resource grade GPS unit, providing an accurate location of the footpath and its features. A data dictionary of information describing each asset is created. Typical information might include the name of the asset, year built, dimensions, capacity, construction type, and materials used. All of this helps us determine the condition of trail and evaluate problems. 20% of the trail is assessed each year, meaning that every section of the trail is walked and assessed every five years.

The NPS uses the FMSS database to request funding for projects identified by the clubs in this assessment process. For funding, the NPS needs to plan projects 3-6 years in advance. Each club needs to submit a five-year plan to the ATC regional office by January 1, 2006.

Discussion points:

Arc Explorer, a free online program, can be used for club planning. The trail location (a red line) is available on the ATC web site.

Other mapping programs are Terraplain and Google Earth

How do each club's Local Management Plan and the Five Year Plans mesh?

ATC Organizational Structure and Budget – Proudman presented information about the ATC organizational structure and budget. ATC has a six million dollar budget, which is spent by five departments:

- Communications
- Conservation
- Executive
- Finance and Administration
- Membership and Development

The Conservation Department accounts for 44% of the budget (\$2.66 million, of which \$1.7 million comes from the NPS) and has five divisions:

- Land Management - \$454,000
- Volunteer Development and Cooperative Management - \$220,000 (skills training)
- Visitor Management and Public Safety - (ridgerunners)
- Land Trust - \$140,000
- Trail Protection - \$160,000 (advocacy).

Mid Atlantic Region Budget Process – Lutz said that the MARPC will help set priorities and determine how the Mid Atlantic Regional budget will be spent. The ATC Conservation Department budget and programs have been split regionally, and the regional staff will need advice and consent to determine priorities and where the resources should go.

New Business

1. Queen City Airport -- Wiemann passed out news clippings about the proposal to relocate the private Queen City Airport in Allentown, PA to Heidelberg Township, Lehigh County, about a mile and a half south of Bake Oven Knob. The Committee discussed the role that the RPC should play in issues such as this, and agreed that issues such as this are within the group's responsibility. Proudman will do literature and policy research about FAA involvement in any decision to move an airport.

2. Grants – Proudman reported that five clubs have applied for \$7-8,000 in the Grants to Clubs program. There are also grants available for outreach targeting underserved and minority groups. An up and coming area is community outreach.

3. Trail angels – Hooper asked about policies related to trail angels. Abandoned items and memorials may be removed from the trail. Ridgerunners are instructed to remove such items. Clubs can also check with Bob Gray, NPS Ranger.

4. First aid requirements for sawyers – ATC will reimburse \$65 toward the cost of first aid training.

5. Publicity – Hooper said that local clubs need more publicity in local papers. Committee members felt that today people get their information from the web and TV, and that newspapers may not be provide the most effective publicity for club activities and volunteer needs. Suggestions included sponsored links on Google and joining a local volunteer center to recruit volunteers. The Committee agreed that recruitment and retention of volunteers is a regional issue.

6. Volunteer/professional relationships – Hooper stated that the Regional Office needs to be responsive to club questions and issues.

7. State agreements – Hooper stated that state agreements, such as the recently signed Pennsylvania MOU, should be handled thru the regional committee so that clubs know what is happening. Copies of the agreement were not distributed to clubs far enough in advance of the signing for review.

8. Long distance/large group hiker problems – Wright stated that he has seen first hand problems created by long distance hikers who lack “proper etiquette” and large group usage that overloads a facility. Committee members suggested that clubs set a goal of having club member monitor conditions and help users understand negative effect that they are having with their actions and usage. ALDA is promoting a Hike in Harmony program and clubs can work with them. A statement outlining ATC policies should be included in thru hiker guides. The 30 ridgerunners now in place can help with these problems, but cost \$150,000.

9 Chainsaw re-certification – Proudman stated that classes will be offered in 2006 in an attempt to even out the number of sawyers that need to be re-certified each year (the initial certification push created a large number of renewals due in 2007).bulge in the hold classes in 2006 (advanced) to even out bumps in 3 yr re-certification time.

RPC Committee Structure – The RPC settled on proposed subcommittees for the MARPC:

- Budget/Grants
- Corridor Management/Land Use
- Meetings
- Natural/Cultural resources
- RPC handbook
- Trail Management
- Volunteer Development (including education)

The Chair of each subcommittee must be a voting RPC member. The Chair of each subcommittee can recruit other individuals who are not RPC representatives or alternates for their subcommittees, but all subcommittee members must be ATC members. Snow passed around a sign up sheet for everyone to volunteer for a committee assignment.

Dates for spring meeting – Snow suggested a two-day meeting, inviting agency partners. Dates selected are March 11 and 12, 2006.

Stewardship Council motion – Hooper moved and the Committee unanimously approved the following motion: That the Board of Directors allow each region to appoint two members to the Stewardship Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 PM.

Barbara L. Wiemann
MARPC Secretary